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ABSTRACT

Vocational training forms part of the integrated educational system in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). About 85 percent of young people attend vocational training courses after completion of 10-year general schooling. Skilled worker training is offered in 291 trades with opportunities for specialization in 500 fields. In 98 trades, apprenticeship courses lead to skilled workers qualification and university entrance level. Other options are available for youth leaving the general comprehensive school before completion of the eighth grade. Apprentices are guaranteed training in another trade or job if their contracts are prematurely terminated, receive monthly allowances, may use all cultural and social facilities of enterprises, and receive free medical care. Vocational training comprises theoretical and practical instruction, the relationship being roughly 30:70. It consists of general and basic vocational training (60 percent) and vocational specialization (40 percent). In all regions of East Germany and in all sectors of the national economy a network of vocational training facilities exists, such as vocational schools run by enterprises, municipal vocational schools, and workshops. An extensive system of occupational information, orientation, and guidance beginning in the lower grades helps young people choose an appropriate trade--one that interests them and that has openings for apprentices. (YLB)

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Vocational training in the GDR

The constitution guarantees all young people in the German Democratic Republic the right to vocational training. About 85 per cent, i.e. the majority of young people, enter vocational life after completion of ten-year general schooling. They attend vocational training courses taking between two and three years to become skilled workers. Roughly 15 per cent of school youth continue their education after the 10th grade at different facilities leading to university entrance level and then attend university or college. All young skilled workers are given a job in their trade after the completion of training.

Vocational training - a component of the GDR's integrated socialist educational system

All socialist countries, including the GDR, have a clear humanistic concept for education and upbringing along socialist lines. This concept is incorporated in the Integrated Socialist Education Act of 1965 and was further evolved in basic documents on vocational training in 1976, on adult education in 1979, on the responsibilities of universities and colleges in 1980, etc., in keeping with the further development of socialist society in the GDR.

In the course of three decades, vocational training facilities have been created in the GDR which provide the educational, personnel and material conditions required for providing all young people with a thorough vocational training.

These include:

- Vocational schools training, workshops and apprenticeships in factories and institutions;
- Career guidance facilities - starting with the government career guidance centres and ending with the teachers at all general comprehensive schools, who are responsible for vocational guidance in addition to their teaching activities;
- Facilities for the pre-service and in-service education of teachers for all spheres of vocational training;
- Leading bodies for vocational training and scientific institutions occupied with research in this sector.

Vocational training forms part of the integrated educational system in the GDR which is made up of:

- Pre-school education facilities,
- Ten-year general comprehensive polytechnical schools,
- Vocational training facilities,
- Educational facilities leading to university entrance level,
- Engineering and technical schools,
- Universities and colleges,
- Training and further education facilities for adults,
- Special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children.

The GDR's entire education system is public, secular, scientifically-founded, uniform and free of charge.

The set-up and inner structure of the education system make it possible for all, both the young and older ones, to choose from a variety of qualification opportunities. There is a smooth transition from one educational facility to the next higher. The only thing that counts is ability and readiness to learn.

> Generally, pupils undergo ten-year schooling. It is only at this juncture (when the pupils are 16 or 17 years old) that they embark upon different educational paths, this, however, in such a manner that all of them have access to the highest educational facilities at the appropriate time. Those leaving school after the 10th grade of general school are offered the following opportunities: two or three years of vocational training; three-year courses combining vocational training with the acquisition of the university entrance certificate; two years at extended secondary school for the acquisition of university entrance certificate; attendance at certain technical schools.
>
> Young skilled workers with completed vocational training may apply for study courses at technical schools. People having completed technical school courses are entitled to study at universities and colleges. There are many technical disciplines from which young skilled workers can choose and which they can study at colleges following preparatory courses. Working people have an opportunity of acquiring university entrance certificates at evening classes. Many working people avail themselves of the opportunity to attend and complete extra-mural courses at colleges, technical schools or universities alongside their employment.

The educational system of the GDR makes its contribution to opening up to all people the road to science and culture, to a cultured mode of life and meaningful work. It shares

prominently in the new intellectual and moral profile of the working class and the class of cooperative farmers in this country.

The efforts made by the socialist state to ensure vocational training for all people - for older working people this often happens within the framework of adult education - are in the first instance clearly evident in the qualification structure of working people in the GDR, which determines to a substantial degree the great efficiency of the country's national economy. The proportion of highly qualified skilled workers has increased greatly, while that of unskilled workers has decreased constantly. Similarly, the number of college and technical school graduates employed in industry and agriculture has risen substantially.

As things stand today, over 80 per cent of the 8.2 million working people in the GDR have a completed vocational training, or graduated from technical school or college. The 1970 figure was 55 per cent.

Guaranteed right to vocational training

Article 25 (4) of the GDR's Constitution reads:

> "Compulsory education exists in the German Democratic Republic for a ten-year period, to be fulfilled by attendance at a ten-year comprehensive polytechnical school. In particular instances this can be completed at a vocational training institution or an institute for the training or further training of working people. All young persons have the right and duty to learn a trade or profession."

This constitutional right is formulated more precisely in the Integrated Socialist Education Act of 1965, the Youth Act of 1974, the Labour Code of the GDR of 1978 and the Vocational Training Act of 1979.

The Education Act states with regard to the tasks and the content of vocational training:

Section 32

(2) "Uniform principles, to be laid down by the state, shall be applied in vocational training. Heads of government and economic bodies and managers of enterprises and institutions shall be responsible in their sectors for the planning and management of vocational training and for ensuring the conditions necessary for an appropriate process of training.

(5) "The content of vocational training shall be determined by the development of socialist society, the technological revolution and the prospects of socialist production."

Vocational training is to a large extent based on the knowledge and skills imparted at the comprehensive school. This is why two-year training courses are sufficient for most occupations and trades. There are a few trades requiring two-and-a-half or three-year courses, and there are others for which vocational training takes only one-and-a-half years. Successful completion of ten-year schooling is the condition for vocational training. In 1981, 86 per cent of all those who started an apprenticeship were graduates from the 10th grade of the comprehensive secondary school.

Skilled worker's training takes place in 291 trades. This is in line with the current and future requirements of society and the national economy. There are opportunities for specialization in 500 fields, this allowing for a highly versatile employment of the young skilled workers. Some 40 of the above-mentioned 291 trades are rare artisan's trades such as mosaic composers, gold beaters, intarsia cutters, copper fitters and copper-smiths, bell founders, lace-makers and blueprinters. In 98 trades apprenticeship courses lead the young people to skilled worker's qualification and university entrance level. Some 11,000 young people complete their training annually in one of these 89 trades and opt for study courses where their skilled worker's qualification is particularly useful, for instance in technical disciplines, vocational training instruction or ergonomics. Pupils leaving the general comprehensive school after the 8th grade may undergo vocational training in 66 trades and occupations, the training courses taking three years. Young people leaving school before completion of the 8th grade attend one-and-a-half or two-year courses in a partial sector of a trade requiring apprenticeship, depending on their capabilities. Vocational training in the two latter cases is combined with a partial continuation of general education.

The Labour Code of the GDR provides for the responsibility, rights and duties of enterprises and apprentices. Sections 135 to 142 deal with the legal foundations for all the details, the

content, conclusion, extension and termination of apprenticeship contracts. It is, for instance, laid down that vocational training can be completed if it had to be interrupted temporarily or if an apprentice failed to pass the skilled worker's examination successfully. In cases expressly specified by the law for health or other socially justified reasons, it is no longer left to the discretion of enterprises to decide on the extension of apprenticeship contracts. If an apprentice and his parents desire it enterprises are required to extend contracts for a period of up to two years and set this down in writing.

Premature termination of apprenticeship contracts is allowed in exceptional cases only and termination on the part of enterprises is possible only if apprentices are not suited for the trade chosen by them or if they grossly violated work discipline on repeated occasions. (Section 141 /3/).

In order to guarantee the continued vocational development of young people, enterprises have to offer them vocational training in another trade or a reasonable job if their apprenticeship contracts are terminated before the completion of vocational training. (Section 141 /4/). The legal and economic security of young people is ensured by Section 140 of the Labour Code which reads in part:

> "Enterprises are required to conclude employment contracts with apprentices for a job corresponding to their training at least six months before the end of apprenticeship."

Should a young person fail to pass his skilled worker's examination, enterprises are required to offer him or her a job in accordance with their abilities in their own enterprise or in some other factory.

Section 210 of the Labour Code provides for the special protection of the health and working capacity of young people under the age of 18. Working conditions must be in accordance with their state of physical development.

Young people may only be employed if a doctor has certified their fitness for the work to be done by them. They are examined by a doctor at regular intervals, but at least once every year. They must not be assigned physically heavy or

health-endangering work to do.

> Apprenticeship contracts represent a special type of employment contract. The young people are members of the staff of an enterprise with all rights and duties arising therefrom. Most of them are members of the trade unions and of the Free German Youth, the organization of young people in the GDR. Both bring immediate influence to bear on the training and education of the aspiring skilled workers who, in turn, avail themselves of their rights and duties at enterprise level through these two organizations.

Vocational training is free of charge and apprentices receive monthly allowances.

Except for enterprises in mining, metal-working and foundries where pay is higher, apprentices who have completed ten-year schooling receive monthly allowances of

120 marks during the first half-year of apprenticeship

130 marks during the second half-year of apprenticeship

150 marks during the third half-year of apprenticeship

180 marks during the fourth half-year of apprenticeship

200 marks during the fifth and sixth half-year of apprenticeship.

Apprentices without ten-year schooling are paid between 105 and 150 marks a month (except for those in mining, iron and steel and foundries).

Additional monthly allowances of 50 marks are granted in case of need. Apprentices showing outstanding performance receive bonuses.

All the cultural and social facilities of enterprises are open to apprentices, for instance, holiday homes, sports facilities, houses of culture, libraries, and health centres. Medical care, pharmaceuticals, hospitalization and courses of sanatorium and spa treatment are free of charge for apprentices, something which applies to the GDR's entire population. Apprentices are given their full monthly pay also in the event of illness. They (as well as pupils and students) are exempted from the payment of national insurance contributions. Apprenticeship contracts of female apprentices can be extended for up to two years in case of pregnancy. Like all mothers in the GDR they profit from material and social care, for instance in the form

of 26 weeks' paid leave before and after childbirth as well as 1,000 marks in government allowances. Single mothers are paid a monthly grant of 175 marks in addition to their apprentice pay.

The annual holidays of all apprentices amount to 24 days.

All trades are open to girls and boys, except for 30 which are unsuitable for girls on account of health reasons.

Content and organization of apprenticeship

Vocational training comprises theoretical and practical instruction, the relationship being roughly 30 : 70. Moreover, it consists of general and basic vocational training (about 60 per cent) and vocational specialization (about 40 per cent).

General basic training takes place in different forms:

- Apprentices with ten-year schooling are instructed in civics (one lesson per week) and in sports (two lessons per week) - examinations in these subjects form part and parcel of the skilled worker's examination - as well as in the basic subjects of industrial management, socialist law, basic data processing, basic process instrumentation and control engineering and basic electronics.

With the basic subjects, introduced in 1970 at vocational school throughout the GDR, much groundwork has been provided in vocational training for the further development of science and technology and the requirements for mastering them.

Industrial management and socialist law are imparted on the basis of integrated curricula for apprentices in all trades, while in the remaining three subjects teaching takes into account the requirements of the individual trades and occupations.

- Young people leaving school before the completion of the tenth grade are instructed in a number of other general subjects, particularly in the German language and literature, as well as in basic subjects such as industrial management and socialist law.

Basic vocational training takes place in different forms according to trades or groups of trades. Priority is given to the acquisition of elementary work skills and the emergence of work habits, coupled with the theoretical treatment of technological and economic processes.

Vocational specialization takes place during the last phase of the training, that is, during the last six months, in

the workshops of enterprises where the young people are guided to the performance level of skilled workers. As a rule they work at their future workplaces during that period.

> Owing to the fact that the individual trades are relatively broad in their layout, which makes it possible for young people to become acquainted rather quickly with neighbouring fields of work, that general education in part proceeds during vocational training and that it is possible to respond quickly to the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution - among other things through the revision and supplementing of curricula - vocational training creates substantial pre-conditions for versatile employment and for the material security of the future skilled workers.

Apprentice training facilities

In all regions of the GDR and in all sectors of the national economy there exists a network of vocational training facilities such as vocational schools run by enterprises, municipal vocational schools and workshops.

At present the GDR has a total of 727 enterprise-run vocational schools where about 66 per cent of all apprentices are trained. These schools are government institutions in socialist enterprises in which all the equipment for theoretical (vocational schools with the requisite classrooms and laboratories) and for practical training (workshops, laboratories, training cabinets and workplaces for apprentices in enterprise departments) are available.

The teachers and other personnel of enterprise-run vocational schools are on the staff of the enterprise concerned. The directors of such schools are accountable to works managers.

Municipal vocational schools - of which the GDR has about 250 - are government facilities under the supervision of district councils. In these schools skilled workers are trained for industry, agriculture, the distribution and service sectors and for the cooperative and private crafts, that is, they are responsible for the theoretical side of the training, while practical training takes place in the respective enterprises which maintain close links with the municipal vocational schools in order to ensure an appropriate measure of uniformity in education and performance evaluation.

Practical vocational training is above all carried out in apprenticeship workshops as well as in laboratories, specially equipped premises or departments of the training enterprises under real conditions of production. Apprentices operate up-to-date machinery and equipment. Where this is impossible on account of youth protection stipulations, very complicated installations or the danger of accident the apprentices work at specific training plant.

> Workplaces and the type of products to be manufactured by the apprentices are chosen in accordance with the curriculum. The law prohibits apprentices being given work which does not correspond to the objectives and content of training.

Great value is attached to the promotion of apprentices' creative participation in projects important to the national economy.

This takes place, above all, through the involvement of apprentices in the emulation movement which, in socialist society, is an expression of the new character of labour, the free, creative and conscious activity of working people for the well-being of society as a whole. Apprentices concentrate their efforts on tasks connected with the improvement of their study and work results.

Many proposals submitted by young people for the further development of production and technology are displayed at the young innovators' exhibitions. These are annual performance shows held at enterprise, school and similar levels, so that the results of the innovators' activities can be studied and used by others.

It has proved worthwhile to carry out major parts of practical vocational training as part of youth projects where the apprentices have an opportunity, by the side of young skilled workers, to learn to master production processes independently.

Accommodation in apprentices' hostels are available for a large number of young people who want to learn a trade and have to do so away from home.

Over the past 30 years, the GDR's vocational training facilities have catered for about five million young people who are now highly qualified skilled workers, over one million there-

of between 1976 and 1980. During those years, the annual number of school-leavers increased by about 10,000 which made it necessary to provide about 40,000 additional places of apprenticeship in the national economy.

- At present, more than 50,000 vocational school teachers, instructors and educationists are employed at the GDR's approximately 1,000 vocational schools and over 1,300 apprentices' hostels. In addition, some 100,000 authorized skilled workers are involved in the practical side of vocational training.

- Roughly 12,000 classrooms are available in vocational schools with an average of 23 apprentices per class.

- There are 600 modern training workshops and laboratories for practical vocational training.

- A total of 20,000 marks is set aside from the national budget at present for the training of every apprentice.

- 100 million marks was allocated during the past three years for the creation in all vocational schools of rooms for instruction in the technological subjects such as process instrumentation and control engineering, data processing and electronics.

- Roughly 2,400 marks are annually set aside from the national budget per apprentice for board, lodging and care in apprentices' hostels. 'The apprentices pay only 1.10 mark per day for board and lodging.

- The young people living in hostels are given days off five times a year for travelling home at weekends, on public holidays and their annual holidays, the fare being paid by enterprises.

Training opportunities and career guidance

It is a complicated problem to harmonize the occupational wishes, educational needs, inclinations and interests of young people, their desires regarding attendance at higher educational facilities and the choice of study courses on the one hand with the needs of society and its possibilities. Many young people, their parents and teachers are affected by this problem and joint consideration is necessary in order to find the best possible solution for all sides. If the right to work is to be ensured for all young people, it is a matter of necessity to admit only as many apprentices for vocational training to a specific trade as are needed by the national economy, the number of working

people needed being established on the basis of planning on a national scale. The same applies to places in universities, engineering schools, colleges and technical schools.

If more young people apply for vocational training in a definite trade than are required it is necessary to select from the applicants and to channel the others into other, generally similar, occupations. In any event the pupils' interests in several trades is stimulated at school.

In the GDR there exists an extensive system of occupational information, orientation and guidance within the framework of which schools, elected parents' representatives, enterprises and social organizations - particularly the youth organization - work closely together in helping young people to find and independently choose an appropriate trade. The worth of career guidance, which sets in several years before the young people leave school, finds reflection in the fact that over the past three or four years about 80 per cent of all those concerned received an apprenticeship in the trade of their choice.

Strictly speaking, occupational guidance begins in the lower grades of the secondary school in that pupils are acquainted with the various trades and enterprises in their neighbourhood.

Systematic career guidance then sets in particularly in the sixth and in the seventh grade when polytechnical instruction begins. This takes place four hours a week in industrial and agricultural enterprises. Career guidance does not terminate before the young people have decided on an apprenticeship and signed an apprenticeship contract in the 10th grade.

217 government-run career guidance centres and a large number of specific information centres in enterprises supply pupils and their parents with details about individual trades and qualification opportunities, above all at the time when young people are about to apply for vocational training.

Pupils apply for vocational training at the beginning of the 10th grade. Their schools provide them with the required application forms, including a medical fitness certificate which they send in to the enterprise of their choice.

Works managers together with representatives of the trade

unions and the youth organization decide on the admission of apprentices, the personality of the young person, their motives, performance at school and state of health being taken into consideration.

Enterprises are required to make a decision not later than 21 days after receipt of an application and to inform applicants on their decision in writing. In the event of a negative answer, enterprises have to give the reasons therefore. Enterprises may, given the consent of the applicants concerned, forward applications to other enterprises with vocational training opportunities in the same or in similar trades.

Within the course of four weeks after an enterprise's decision to admit apprentices they conclude apprenticeship contracts with the tenth-graders. These are valid provided the eligible young people complete ten-year schooling successfully.